

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/04/22 : CIA-RDP86T00608R000300070020-1

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2005/04/22 : CIA-RDP86T00608R000300070020-1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
10 April 1975

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Indochina
(As of 1600 EDST)
No. 8

CAMBODIA

The Tactical Situation

1. Phnom Penh's outer defenses appear to be collapsing. Khmer Communist forces last night apparently moved through gaps in the defense line north of Pochentong airport and today began attacking government units from the rear. Other government units last night made further withdrawals from positions northwest of Pochentong, and insurgent elements have reportedly infiltrated to within three miles of the airfield. No recoilless rifle or mortar rounds landed near airport facilities today, but increased rocket and artillery attacks forced a brief suspension of DC-8 operations. West of the airfield, the Communists are continuing their push along Route 4, and the army's main ammunition dump now appears to be seriously threatened.

2. Some government units on the east bank of the Mekong River opposite Phnom Penh have also broken following another day of steady ground attacks. The Khmer navy today picked up a number of troops swimming in the river, including the commander of the two government brigades on the east bank. The Communists are firing recoilless rifles across the river at Phnom Penh's waterfront. Along the river to the northeast, government positions upstream from the main navy headquarters were the targets of intense shellings last night.

Evacuation Status

25X1

3. The US Mission's evacuation list now includes 597 persons: 148 US citizens and 449 third-country nationals and

NSA review(s) completed.

State Department
review(s) completed.

[REDACTED]

Cambodians. Ambassador Dean has requested permission to implement the final evacuation phase no later than day-break, April 12, Phnom Penh time (1830 hours, April 11, Washington time). CINCPAC has directed the aircraft carrier "Hancock" to join the Eagle Pull task force in the Gulf of Thailand. The "Hancock" is proceeding at flank speed.

Political Developments

4. Acting Cambodian president Saukham Koy today called an emergency session of the cabinet. Koy met with Ambassador Dean just before the cabinet session and indicated that he would ask Prime Minister Long Boret to step down and allow Chau Sau -- the leader of the Democratic Party -- to form a new government and immediately arrange a "humanitarian solution" to the conflict. Koy told the Ambassador that he expected some opposition to the move from Boret who -- according to Koy -- has an unrealistic assessment of the government's military position. All of this could come to naught given the rapidly deteriorating military situation and the possibility that key government leaders may soon be leaving aboard US evacuation aircraft.

VIETNAM

The Battle for Xuan Loc

5. Both sides appear to regard the battle for Xuan Loc on Saigon's eastern flank, as critical and are committing additional units.

6. Heavy artillery and rocket attacks were launched against the city today, and the Communists continue to expand their holdings nearby and strengthen their blockade of Route 1 leading to Saigon. Blocking the major withdrawal route may tend to encourage the defenders to stand and fight, with the option of easy escape shut off by the Communists.

7. Parts of three North Vietnamese divisions -- the 6th, 7th, and the 341st -- have been identified in the action. The 6th Division, which is based in the Xuan Loc area, however,

-2-

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED]

includes two regiments with poor fighting records. The 7th Division is the only real veteran of major battles in Military Region 3, but thus far only one of its regiments has been committed to Xuan Loc. If the entire division were committed, the balance of power at Xuan Loc would definitely favor the North Vietnamese.

8. The South Vietnamese are committing all of the 18th Division on this front. This division has not earned much respect as a tough fighting unit, but it is at home and has reason to stand and fight. Military Region 3 commander, General Toan, has moved a second armor unit from west of Saigon and has ordered the 1st Airborne Brigade to attack Communist concentrations around Xuan Loc. A Marine Brigade has been sent to establish a blocking position east of Bien Hoa, and this unit might also be called to help at Xuan Loc.

Threat Increasing West of Saigon

9. Pressure against the provinces west and southwest of Saigon is building rapidly, and a second major battlefront may develop close to Saigon. Early this week major parts of the North Vietnamese 5th Division abruptly pulled back from the Moc Hoa area where they seemed about to push into the northern delta. The South Vietnamese now believe that most of this division, and parts of the 3rd Division, are moving into the western districts of both Hau Nghia and Long An Provinces.

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED]

10. Small advance units of the North Vietnamese 5th Division have been attacking near the Long An Province capital of Tan An for the past two days. The Communists give a high priority to cutting Route 4 south of Saigon, and recent shifts of the North Vietnamese 8th Division in the delta suggests that this unit could soon be in a position to block Route 4 north of My Tho.

25X1

25X1

11. The South Vietnamese are shifting sizeable forces in reaction to these new Communist moves. The 4th Airborne Brigade has recently been shifted from Saigon to Hau Nghia Province and remnants of the 22nd Division have been sent to bolster government territorial forces defending Long An Province. One regiment of the South Vietnamese 7th Division has been brought up from MR-4 to near Tan An, and parts of the government's 9th Division may be freed to help protect Saigon's western flanks. The Communists, however, have tied down most of the 7th and 21st Divisions in defense of Can Tho, the delta's most important city.

12. The Communists may be trying to force Saigon's defenders to concentrate east and west of the capital. This could weaken the government's defenses to the north where the North Vietnamese 9th Division is deployed. The quickness of these Communist moves suggests that Hanoi has decided to try to use its forces now in place to inflict real damage on Saigon's forces without waiting for additional Communist divisions to join the battle.

The Situation in Binh Thuan Province

13. The Communists have yet to challenge the government's holdings in coastal Binh Thuan Province, which has been defended solely by territorial forces since 1972, currently does not face a serious North Vietnamese mainforce threat, but Communist divisions recently freed from northern battlefronts could be committed to seize control of the province in coming weeks.

14. A defensive perimeter has been established around the capital city of Phan Thiet, and other units have been deployed to protect areas along Route 1 where most of the rural population of the province lives.

15. Local force Communist sappers infiltrated into Phan Thiet last week setting off explosive charges in the central market and used portable loudspeakers to incite the people to riot. The resulting panic was quickly brought under control, but only after looters destroyed two US compounds which had been evacuated.

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED]

16. Colonel Nghia has requested the air support that he has been receiving from Bien Hoa airbase to be continued. With such support and adequate anti-tank weapons, Nghia claims he can defend the province until the rains begin next month.

SA-2 Missile Units to South Vietnam

25X1

17. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED] the North Vietnamese are strengthening their air defenses in South Vietnam. Photography [REDACTED] spotted several pieces of SA-2 missile equipment in northeastern Cambodia near the South Vietnam border. [REDACTED] earlier indicated that four SA-2 regiments were located near the Demilitarized Zone and in northern South Vietnam. The Communists are likely to continue their buildup of air defenses in the newly "liberated" areas and may even move SA-2 firing units into the provinces north of Saigon.

25X1

The New Cabinet

18. Preliminary information on Prime Minister Nguyen Ba Can's new cabinet suggests that it will do little to put new life in the anti-Communist resistance. Several appointees are holdovers from the Khiem cabinet. The new faces are technicians or political associates of Can with little national prominence. They all are solidly pro-government. Several of the most important portfolios -- foreign affairs, defense, interior -- have yet to be announced, possibly because Thieu and Can have not yet agreed on individuals who are willing to serve.

25X1

19. Can has indicated [REDACTED] that the full cabinet will be selected by April 11 and sworn in the next day. The first working session is scheduled for the 13th, a date which seems unusually optimistic given the fact that several positions are still vacant.

Le Duan May Be in South Vietnam

20. Recent reporting suggests North Vietnamese party boss Le Duan may now be visiting Communist controlled areas of South Vietnam in order to make a first hand assessment of the situation in the South. Le Duan reportedly will

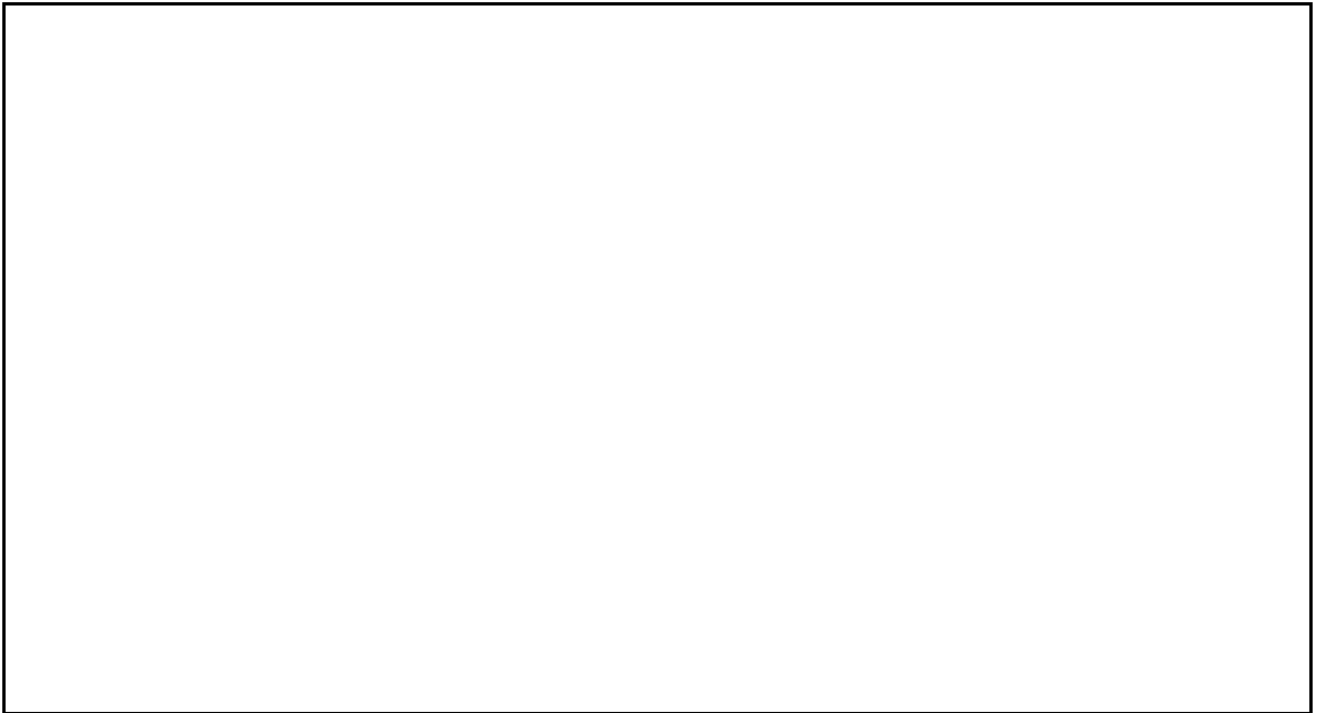
25X1

25X1

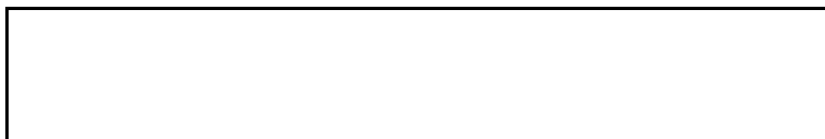


spend approximately a month in South Vietnam, mostly in the southern part of the country where he will visit major Communist military headquarters.

25X1



-6-



25X1